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PHILOTHEOS KOKKINOS'S *HYPOMNĒMA* ON SAINT NIKODEMOS THE YOUNGER (*BHG* 2307)

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ABSTRACT. Philotheos Kokkinos was one of the most prolific late-Byzantine hagiographers, who eulogized saints of old, as well as contemporaneous holy figures. He dedicated the first among his *vitae* of contemporaneous saints to the little-known holy man Nikodemos the Younger from the Philokalles monastery in Thessalonike. While superior of this monastery, Kokkinos gathered information about the holy man's life and arranged it into the form of a short *vita*, titled *hypomnēma* (*BHG* 2307). This article analyzes the ways in which Kokkinos constructed an identity in narrative form for Nikodemos, exploring elements of holy foolery, hesychast influences, the miracle accounts weaved into the narrative, as well as its intended audience.

Keywords: Philotheos Kokkinos, late Byzantium, hagiography, hesychasm, *hypomnēma*, narrative structure, Nikodemos the Younger, holy fool, miracles

Introduction[1]

Three decades after the relics of St Nikodemos the Younger had been discovered in Thessalonike in the early 1310s, Philotheos Kokkinos described the joy and pride of the locals in the *vita* he composed for the saint (hereafter also referred to as the *v. Nik.*):

> the whole city of Thessalonike … thought that the discovery of the holy body of the divine Nikodemos was a stroke of good fortune and a source of unceasing joy. And they took no greater pleasure in the nature and

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> location and good order of the city or in the strength of its walls than in this 'holy man'. For each one believed the magnificence and godliness of the relics to be his own glory.[2]

This article investigates Kokkinos's hagiographical account in honor of this little-known late-Byzantine holy man. As abbot of the Philokalles monastery in Thessalonike where Nikodemos had lived as a monk and his relics had been discovered and preserved, Kokkinos was well positioned to try his pen and talent at reconstructing the life of the holy man. The ensuing *hypomnēma* is Kokkinos's first hagiographical composition for a contemporaneous holy figure and the only extant source on Nikodemos's life. This article explores the ways in which Kokkinos arranged the scanty biographical information on the holy man into narrative form, crafting a holy identity for his hero as a fool for Christ's sake and practicing hesychast. The article has a fourfold structure. First, it offers a short biographical sketch of the hagiographer, highlighting the socio-cultural context of his life and literary activity. Secondly, it presents the manuscript tradition of Kokkinos's text in honor of Nikodemos, as well as its modern editions and translations. Thirdly, it introduces the 'hagiographical genre' of *hypomnēma*. Finally, it offers a detailed analysis of the text, addressing, *inter alia*, the elements of holy foolery, hesychast influences, the miracle accounts weaved into the narrative, and its intended audience.

1. Philotheos Kokkinos – a brief *curriculum vitae*[3]

Philotheos Kokkinos hailed from Thessalonike, where he was born around the turn of the fourteenth century to a family of seemingly modest circumstances and alleged Jewish origin. He received a classical education under the "gentleman scholar" Thomas Magistros (*ca*. 1280–*ca*. 1347/8) and reportedly worked for him as a cook to offset the cost of his studies.[4] Despite this modest background, Kokkinos had a distinguished ecclesiastical career. As a monk, he spent a considerable time on Mount Athos, enjoying the spiritual guidance of renowned

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[2] Philotheos Kokkinos, *The Vita of Nikodemos* (hereafter *v. Nik.*) 7.20-26, ed. Demetrios G. Tsames, *Φιλοθέου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως τοῦ Κοκκίνου ἁγιολογικὰ ἔργα, Α΄. Θεσσαλονικεῖς ἅγιοι* (Thessalonike: Κέντρον Βυζαντινῶν Ἐρευνῶν, 1985), 90. English translation by Alice-Mary Talbot, "Nikodemos, a holy fool in late Byzantine Thessalonike," in *ΔΩΡΟΝ ΡΟΔΟΠΟΙΚΙΛΟΝ: Studies in Honour of Jan Olof Rosenqvist*, ed. Denis Searby (Uppsala: Uppsala University Press, 2012), 223–232, at 229.

[3] On Kokkinos's life and œuvre, see Mihail Mitrea, "A Late-Byzantine Hagiographer: Philotheos Kokkinos and His *Vitae* of Contemporary Saints" (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2018), 38–131; see also Dionysios A. Tsentikopoulos, "Φιλόθεος Κόκκινος. Βίος και έργο" (PhD thesis, Aristotle University of Thessalonike, 2001), 19–154 (life), 157–366 (writings).

[4] On Thomas Magistros, see Niels Gaul, *Thomas Magistros und die spätbyzantinische Sophistik. Studien zum Humanismus urbaner Eliten in der frühen Palaiologenzeit* (Mainzer Veröffentlichungen zur Byzantinistik 10) (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011), especially 229–271.

holy men such as Sabas the Younger (*ca*. 1283–1348) at Vatopedi and Germanos Maroules (*ca*. 1252–*ca*. 1336) near the Great Lavra, both of whom he would later eulogize in hagiographical works. In his forties, he served as abbot of the Philokalles monastery[5] in Thessalonike (1340/1–1342) and subsequently as superior of the Great Lavra (1342–1345). By his late forties he was appointed metropolitan of Thracian Herakleia[6] by Patriarch Isidore I Boucheir (1347–1350)—whose *vita* he would later write—and was elevated to the patriarchal throne after six years as metropolitan. However, after a brief tenure of less than a year and a half, he was deposed—following Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos's forced abdication and John V Palaiologos's rise to power—and reportedly striped of his priestly office. After a decade of enforced leisure, mostly in Constantinople at the Monastery of Christ Akataleptos, Kokkinos was reinstated on the patriarchal throne in the autumn of 1364. As evidenced by the *Register of the Patriarchate of Constantinople*, he was actively involved in the political and religious life of Byzantium during his twelve-year tenure.[7] Finally, Kokkinos was deposed a second time in 1376 and died of old age after a couple of years. Within two decades of his demise, he came to be celebrated as a saint, and today the Greek Orthodox Church celebrates his feast day on the eleventh of October.[8]

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5 On the Philokalles monastery, dedicated to Christ the Savior, see Raymond Janin, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins (Bithynie, Hellespont, Latros, Galèsios, Trébizonde, Athènes, Thessalonique)* (Paris: Institut français d'études byzantines, 1975), 400, 418–419; Paul Magdalino, "Some additions and corrections to the list of Byzantine churches and monasteries in Thessalonica," *Revue des études byzantines* 35 (1977): 277–285, at 282; George I. Theocharides, "Μία ἐξαφανισθεῖσα σημαντικὴ μονὴ τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης. Ἡ μονὴ Φιλοκάλλη," *Μακεδονικά* 21 (1981): 319–350; Marcus L. Rautman, "Ignatius of Smolensk and the late Byzantine monasteries of Thessaloniki," *Revue des études byzantines* 49 (1991): 143–169, at 157–158.

6 On Thracian Herakleia, see Andreas Külzer, *Ostthrakien (Eurōpē)* (Tabula Imperii Byzantini 12) (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2008), 398–408.

7 Jean Darrouzès, *Les regestes des actes du patriarcat de Constantinople*, vol. 1: *Les actes des patriarches*, fasc. 5: *Les regestes de 1310 à 1376* (Paris: Institut français d'études byzantines, 1977), nos. 2463–2681a. The *Register* survived in the fourteenth and fifteenth-century *Vind. hist. gr*. 47 and *Vind. hist. gr*. 48 and documents the period between 1315–1372 and 1379–1402. See the forthcoming *Das Register des Patriarchats von Konstantinopel*, vol. 4: *Edition und Übersetzung aus der Urkunden aus den Jahren 1364–1372*, eds. Otto Kresten and Christian Gastgeber (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 19.4) (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften). On the *Register*, see Gastgeber, Ekaterini Mitsiou, and Johannes Preiser-Kapeller (eds.), *The Register of the Patriarchate of Constantinople: An Essential Source for the History and Church of Late Byzantium* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2013).

8 See Sofia Kotzabassi, "Eine Akoluthie zu Ehren des Philotheos Kokkinos," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 46 (1996): 299–310; Tsames, "Εἰκονογραφικὲς μαρτυρίες γιὰ τὸν ἅγιο Φιλόθεο Κόκκινο πατριάρχη Κωνσταντινουπόλεως," *Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρὶς τῆς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης* 22 (1977): 37–52; see also Basil Dentakes, *Βίος καὶ ἀκολουθία τοῦ ἁγίου Φιλοθέου πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως (1353–1354 καὶ 1364–1376), τοῦ θεολόγου* (Athens, 1971); *Πρακτικὰ Θεολογικοῦ συνεδρίου εἰς τιμὴν καὶ μνήμην τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν Φιλοθέου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως τοῦ Θεσσαλονικέως (14–16 Νοεμβρίου 1983)* (Thessalonike, 1986).

Kokkinos's life coincided with a turbulent period in the history of Byzantium.[9] After a time of relative stability until the 1320s, the fourteenth century was riddled with political malaise. Prolonged civil wars were coupled by territorial contraction due to loss of territory to the Serbs and Ottoman Turks and increasing commercial dominance of Venice and Genoa. Byzantium also faced increasing impoverishment, lack of social cohesion and social upheavals in its cities, such as the Zealot revolt in Thessalonike.[10] Moreover, the mid fourteenth-century brought the onset of the acrimonious hesychast debates.[11] In spite of, or perhaps in response to, this socio-political, economic, and religious mayhem, late Byzantium nurtured a significant blossoming of arts and letters, including a revival in the composition of saints' *lives* and miracle collections. Around eighty percent of the surviving late-Byzantine hagiographical texts comprise compositions about saints of old (*metaphraseis* or, as Talbot put it, "old wine in new bottles"), while the other twenty percent represent *vitae* and *enkomia* of new saints, especially leading figures of the hesychast movement such as Gregory Palamas.[12] In line with contemporaneous trends, Kokkinos

[9] On late Byzantium, see Donald M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261–1453*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Dimiter Angelov (ed.), *Church and Society in Late Byzantium* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Medieval Institute Publications, 2009).

[10] On the Zealot revolt in the "second city" of the Byzantine Empire (and the sources documenting it), see Marie-Hélène Congourdeau, *Les zélotes: une révolte urbaine à Thessalonique au 14ème siècle: le dossier des sources* (Paris: Beauchesne, 2013); eadem (ed.), *Thessalonique au temps des Zélotes (1342–1350). Actes de la table ronde organisée dans le cadre du 22e Congrès international des études byzantines, à Sofia, le 25 août 2011* (Paris: ACHCByz, 2014); Christos Malatras, "Ο μύθος των Ζηλωτών της Θεσσαλονίκης," *Βυζαντιακά* 30 (2012/13): 229–242; John W. Barker, "Late Byzantine Thessalonike: A second city's challenges and responses," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 57 (2003): 5–33, at 16–21; see also Ihor Ševčenko, "Nicolas Cabasilas' 'anti-Zealot' discourse: a reinterpretation," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 11 (1957): 81–171.

[11] See, for instance, John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Hesychasm: Historical, Theological and Social Problems: Collected Studies* (London: Variorum, 1974); Dirk Krausmüller, "The rise of hesychasm," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 5: *Eastern Christianity*, ed. Michael Angold (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 101–126; Norman Russell, "The Hesychast Controversy," in *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*, eds. Anthony Kaldellis and Niketas Siniossoglou (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 494–508; see also Tudor Teoteoi, "Isihasmul şi criza conştiinţei bizantine în secolul al XIV-lea," *Studii Teologice* (series III, year III) 3 (2007): 5–62.

[12] For an overview of Palaiologan hagiography, see Talbot, "Hagiography in late Byzantium," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, vol. 1: *Periods and Places*, ed. Stephanos Efthymiadis (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 173–195; eadem, "Old wine in new bottles: the rewriting of saints' lives in the Palaiologan period," in *The Twilight of Byzantium. Aspects of Cultural and Religious History in the Late Byzantine Empire*, eds. Slobodan Ćurčić and Doula Mouriki (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University, 1991), 15–26. On miracle collections, see Efthymiadis, "Late Byzantine collections of miracles and their implications," in *Οἱ ἥρωες της Ορθοδόξης Εκκλησίας. Οἱ νέοι ἅγιοι, 8ος-16ος αιώνας*, ed. Eleonora Kountoura-Galake (Athens: Center for Byzantine Studies, 2004), 239–250; idem, "Collections of miracles (fifth–fifteenth centuries)," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, vol. 2: *Genres and Contexts*, ed. Efthymiadis (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 103–142, at 128–129.

eulogized holy men and women from the early Christian era, such as St Anysia of Thessalonike (*BHG* 146), St Demetrios the Myroblytos (*BHG* 547d), and St Febronia of Nisibis (*BHG* 659g), as well as five contemporaneous figures: Nikodemos the Younger (*BHG* 2307), Sabas the Younger (*BHG* 1606), Isidore I Boucheir (*BHG* 962), Germanos Maroules (*BHG* 2164), and Gregory Palamas (*BHG* 718). With the exception of Nikodemos, whose *vita* he composed during his hegoumenate at Philokalles, Kokkinos was personally acquainted with all the contemporaneous figures he eulogized. They had been either his spiritual fathers (Sabas and Germanos) or friends and fellow combatants in the hesychast debates (Isidore and Palamas).

2. Manuscript tradition, critical editions, and translations

Kokkinos's *hypomnēma* on Nikodemos survived in two manuscripts: the fourteenth-century codex Meteora, Monastery of Transfiguration 374, ff. 3^{r}–8^{r} (hereafter *M*) and the early sixteenth-century Mount Athos, St Panteleimon Monastery 571 (Lambros 6078), ff. 248^{r}–257^{r} (hereafter *P*).[13] In both codices, colophons spell out the *termini ante quem* for their production. Thus, on f. 178^{v} of *M* a certain monk Athanasios Glabas wrote that he finished copying the book in May 1359, with the support of his spiritual son, hieromonk Meletios. In the case of *P*, a certain copyist Demetrios, son of deacon/priest (παπᾶς) Chalkias, noted on f. 259^{v} that he completed the book on April 17, 1522, having had the (financial?) support of a certain Georgios *grammatikos*. Both *M* and *P* seem to belong to the same family, since they transmit almost the same content, although placed in a slightly different order. It might even be the case that *P* is the *apographon* of *M*.[14] For instance, if Kokkinos's *hypomnēma* comes in first position in *M*, in *P* is copied close to the end of the codex. Their content, including the story of Barlaam and Joasaph (*BHG* 224), excerpts from the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, and *stichēra* for novice monks, suggests that *M* and *P* had been likely copied and used in a monastic milieu; for instance, the scribe of *P* added the formula *eulogēson despota*

[13] For detailed descriptions of *M* (213 x 145 mm, ff. 213), see Nikos A. Bees, *Τὰ χειρόγραφα τῶν Μετεώρων. Κατάλογος περιγραφικὸς τῶν χειρογράφων κωδίκων τῶν ἀποκειμένων εἰς τὰς μονὰς τῶν Μετεώρων*, vol. 1: *Τὰ χειρόγραφα τῆς Μονῆς Μεταμορφώσεως* (Athens, 1967, ²1998), 394–395, 663–664; idem, "Geschichtliche Forschungsresultate und Mönchs- und Volkssagen über die Gründer der Meteorenklöster," *Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher* 3 (1922): 364–403, at 397–402; Robert Volk, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*. VI/1. *Historia animae utilis de Barlaam et Ioasaph (spuria)* (Patristische Texte und Studien 61) (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 353–355. For *P* (205 x 150 mm, ff. 259), see Spyridon P. Lambros, *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts on Mount Athos* = *Κατάλογος τῶν ἐν ταῖς βιβλιοθήκαις τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὄρους ἑλληνικῶν κωδίκων*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1900), 399; Volk, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, 287–288.

[14] See Bees, "Forschungsresultate," 401, n. 4; cf. Volk, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, 288.

("master, give the blessing") after the title of Kokkinos's composition (which features the term *hypomnēma*, unfortunately illegible in *M*),[15] which suggests that the text was read during liturgical services or in the monastic refectory.

Kokkinos's *hypomnēma* was first printed in 1911 by Manuel Gedeon, who specified that the published text was a transcription (μετεγράφη) of *P*.[16] Seven decades later, in 1981, Demetrios Tsames published a somewhat improved edition of the text, based also solely on *P*,[17] which he subsequently collated with *M* and published the critical edition in 1985.[18] However, its virtues notwithstanding, Tsames's edition is in need of further amendments, which I propose in a forthcoming article. For instance, the title is not omitted in *M*, as Tsames claimed, but is rather illegible, as mentioned already.[19] Moreover, in several cases the paragraph division fails to take into account the otherwise helpful punctuation of the manuscripts (especially of *M*). This further posed difficulties (e.g., the transition from the first to the second paragraph) for Alice-Mary Talbot's translation of the text into English.[20] My translation into Romanian is forthcoming.

3. *Hypomnēma*

Before proceeding to the analysis of the text, a few words are in order about the type of hagiographical composition Kokkinos chose for eulogizing Nikodemos. *Hypomnēma* (literally, "memorial") is a relatively rare form of hagiographical composition. In fact, as Kazhdan pointed out in the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, this term designates various kinds of compositions, such as a type of petition to the emperor, documents from the patriarchal chancellery, and "a form of panegyric of a saint."[21] For instance, it was used in the Metaphrastic Mēnologion

[15] Ms Panteleimon 571, f. 248r: Φιλοθέου πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ὑπόμνημα είς τὸν ὅσιον πατέρα ἡμῶν Νικόδημον τὸν νέον τὸν ἐν τῇ σεβασμίᾳ μονῇ τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ Θεοῦ τῇ τοῦ Φιλοκάλλους· εὐλόγησον δέσποτα. (*Hypomnēma* by Philotheos, Patriarch of Constantinople, on our holy father Nikodemos the Younger from the venerable monastery of Philokalles of our Savior Jesus Christ, the truthful God; master, give the blessing).

[16] Manuel Gedeon, "Φιλοθέου πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ὑπόμνημα είς τὸν ὅσιον πατέρα ἡμῶν Νικόδημον τὸν νέον, τὸν ἐν τῇ σεβασμίᾳ μονῇ τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ Θεοῦ τῇ τοῦ Φιλοκάλλους," in *Ἀρχεῖον ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἱστορίας*, tome I, vol. 2. (Constantinople, 1911), 151, text at 175–185.

[17] Tsames, "Τὸ ὑπόμνημα τοῦ Φιλοθέου Κοκκίνου στὸν ὅσιο Νικόδημο τὸ νέο," *Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρὶς τῆς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης* 26 (1981): 89–99.

[18] Tsames, *Θεσσαλονικεῖς ἅγιοι*, 83–93.

[19] I thank Dr Chariton Karanasios for sending me black and white digital reproductions of *M*, ff. 3r–8r. I am also grateful to Archimandrite Niphon Kapsales and Dr Nikolaos Vryzidis for their permission and support respectively to acquire a colour photo of f. 3r.

[20] Talbot, "Nikodemos," 223–232.

[21] Alexander Kazhdan, "Hypomnema," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. Kazhdan et al. (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 965.

for the biographies of the Holy Apostles, e.g., Andrew (*BHG* 101), James (*BHG* 764), John (*BHG* 919), Matthew (*BHG* 1226), Timothy (*BHG* 1848).[22] Thus, the *hypomnēma* is a concise account of a saint's life, in which the rhetorical and literary embellishments are secondary to the act of conveying biographical information on the holy man commemorated.[23] Kokkinos appears to have been familiar with this 'hagiographical genre,'[24] since he quotes in his eleventh *antirrhētikos* from Symeon Metaphrastes's *hypomnēma* on John the Evangelist.[25] As mentioned, the superscription of Kokkinos's work in *P* features the term *hypomnēma*, which the sixteenth-century scribe most likely copied from the *antigraphon*. Internal evidence also suggests that Kokkinos himself titled his composition *hypomnēma*; thus, in the preface, he employs the cognate verb *hypomimnēskō*: "I will *briefly mention* a few of his [Nikodemos's] deeds."[26] The term appears exclusively in the title, as Kokkinos refers to his text using interchangeably either *logos* (*v. Nik*. 1.1, 4.30, 9.1, 12.3), that is "account," "story," or *diēgēma* (*v. Nik.* 4.31, 11.9), that is "narrative." Keeping in line with the characteristics of this type of hagiographical composition, or rather constrained by the scarce information on the holy man, Kokkinos keeps his work concise, at approximately five folios in *M* and 2.700 words in the modern edition. The brevity of this text is not representative of Kokkinos's work in general. In fact, the *hypomnēma* on Nikodemos is the outlier

[22] See also *BHG* 485 (prophet Daniel), *BHG* 877 (the translation of John Chrysostom's relics to Constantinople), *BHG* 991 (Luke), *BHG* 1493 (Peter and Paul), *BHG* 1527 (Philip), and *BHG* 1835 (Thomas). On the Metaphrastic Mēnologion, see Christian Høgel, *Symeon Metaphrastes. Rewriting and Canonization* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2002); idem, "Symeon Metaphrastes and the metaphrastic movement," in *Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, vol. 2: *Genres and Contexts*, 181–196.

[23] See Elisabeth Schiffer, "Hypomnema als Bezeichnung hagiographischer Texte," in *Wiener Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik: Beiträge zum Symposion Vierzig Jahre Institut für Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik der Universität Wien im Gedenken an Herbert Hunger (Wien, 4.-7. Dezember 2002)*, eds. Wolfram Hörandner, Johannes Koder, and Maria A. Stassinopoulou (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2004), 397–407; see also Martin Hinterberger, "Byzantine hagiography and its literary genres," in *Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, vol. 2: *Genres and Contexts*, 25–60, at 36.

[24] For terminological considerations on 'hagiographical genre' and 'hagiography' in Byzantium, see Hinterberger, "Autobiography and hagiography in Byzantium," *Symbolae Osloenses* 75 (2000): 139–164; idem, "Byzantine hagiography;" cf. Felice Lifshitz, "Beyond positivism and genre: 'Hagiographical' texts as historical narrative," *Viator* 25 (1994): 95–113.

[25] Philotheos Kokkinos, *Antirrhētikos* 11.694-698, ed. Demetrios Kaïmakes, *Φιλοθέου Κοκκίνου δογματικὰ ἔργα* (Thessalonike: Κέντρον Βυζαντινῶν Ἐρευνῶν, 1983), 428: Ὁ δέ γε τῷ ἐπιστηθίῳ Θεολόγῳ σοφώτατα τὸ **ὑπόμνημα** ξυντιθεὶς τοιάδε περὶ ἐκείνου φησὶ τῆς θείας τοῦ Χριστοῦ μεμνημένος μεταμορφώσεως. "Πρὸς τὸ ὄρος τε ἀνιόντι Χριστῷ συνάνεισι, καὶ θέας ἀξιοῦται ὡς ὑπὲρ λόγον καὶ θαυμαστῆς, αὐτὴν τὴν τοῦ Λόγου θεότητα παραγυμνωθεῖσαν ἰδών, καὶ οὐρανίου φωνῆς ἀκούει" (my emphasis). See *PG* 116, 685D.

[26] Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 1.5-6: διὰ βραχέων τὰ ἐκείνου ὑπομνήσομεν.

in terms of length among Kokkinos's *vitae* of contemporaneous saints, which range from *ca*. 20.000 words (the *vita* of Germanos) up to 50.000 words (the *vitae* of Sabas and Palamas).

Its unusual brevity compared to Kokkinos's other lengthy *vitae* may also be explained by the scarce information he confesses to have had at his disposal. Kokkinos took an interest in Nikodemos's life during his hegoumenate at Philokalles, where his hero had entered as a monk towards the end of his life and died around 1307. As only three decades had passed since Nikodemos's demise, Kokkinos most likely gathered some information from people who personally knew the saint, perhaps the monks under his supervision. He offers a glimpse into his working room by stating that:

> "I have composed the present narrative, different parts from different sources, and assembled them like mosaic pieces into the form and shape of a single unit, so to speak, since I have found no prior information on the saint."[27]

The *tesserae*, that is, the building blocks, for his account of Nikodemos's life can be gleaned from the *v. Nik.*: the holy man hailed from the Macedonian city of Berrhoia; he reached maturity during the reign of Emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos (*r*. 1282–1328) and became a vagrant ascetic; towards the end of his life, he arrived in Thessalonike where he joined the monastery of Philokalles as an obedient monk, yet spent a considerable amount of time outside the monastery in the company of harlots; he abstained from food and gave alms to prostitutes and the poor; around the age of forty he was murdered by a group of locals (i.e., 'clients' of the harlots); he was denied burial inside the monastery grounds and a few years later his uncorrupted body was discovered and reburied in the same location; his relics effected miracles and were placed in a church erected on the site with imperial support.

4. The hagiographer at work: weaving the *vita* of the saint

The ways in which Philotheos Kokkinos weaves this scarce biographical information into the narrative form of a *hypomnēma* merits closer investigation. He endeavors to reconstruct the *life* of Nikodemos along the aforementioned milestones and to flesh out a *vita* for the holy man, despite minimal documentation. Kokkinos thus divides the narrative into four roughly equal sections, adding a short preface and a final invocation of similar length:

[27] Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 11.8-11. English translation by Talbot, "Nikodemos," 231.

Preface (*v. Nik*. 1[28], *ca*. 130 words)
1. Early life and wanderings (*v. Nik*. 2–3, *ca*. 540 words)
2. Monastic life at Philokalles and in the company of prostitutes (*v. Nik*. 4–5, *ca*. 600 words)
3. Circumstances surrounding his death; the discovery of his relics (*v. Nik*. 6–7, *ca*. 540 words)
4. Three posthumous miracles; church built in honor of the saint (*v. Nik*. 8–11, *ca*. 700 words)

Final invocation (*v. Nik*. 12 = *ca*. 130 words)

The *hypomnēma* opens with a rhetorical question, in which Kokkinos posits (making a pun on his own name): "Who could pass over the story of the truly great ascetic Nikodemos and not relate his accomplishments to God-loving ears (*philotheoi akoai*)?" Stressing that such an omission "would certainly cause immense harm to lovers of the good [things]," Kokkinos states his intention to "briefly mention a few of his deeds for those who knew him."[29] Therefore, he embarks on this endeavour by casting aside his fear and hesitations—elements pertaining to the *topos modestiae*—for the spiritual purpose of encouraging his audience to emulate the holy man's virtue.[30]

Lacking information on the family, education and early life of his subject, Kokkinos resorts to hagiographical tropes, following long-established guidelines (i.e., the blueprint of the *enkōmion* and the *basilikos logos*) for eulogizing a holy man's origin and childhood.[31] Thus, he briefly commends Nikodemos's family and native city of Berrhoia for its advantages and especially its fruit, the holy man himself:

> "His birthplace … is blessed in its natural location and position and many other advantages, but is adorned by none of these as much as its own fruit, I mean the wondrous Nikodemos. He came not from an undistinguished family, but from one of the most important in these parts."[32]

Kokkinos uses Emperor Andronikos II's reign as a temporal marker to place Nikodemos's *floruit*. Upon reaching maturity, Nikodemos spends the next twenty years as a wandering ascetic. Kokkinos describes the solitary life of his hero in generic terms and compares him to the Old Testament figures of Abraham

[28] I follow the paragraph division in Tsames's edition (1985).
[29] Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik*. 1.1-6. Talbot, "Nikodemos," 224.
[30] On hagiographical commonplaces, see Thomas Pratsch, *Der hagiographische Topos: Griechische Heiligenviten in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), e.g., 22–32 (*topoi* in the *prooimia*).
[31] See, for instance, *Menander Rhetor*, ed. and trans. by Donald A. Russell and Nigel G. Wilson (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1981), xi–xlvi, 76–95.
[32] Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik*. 2.1-5. Talbot, "Nikodemos," 224.

and Moses, writing in *homoioteleuton* that he "chose the life of an expatriate, being oppressed, *afflicted*, *ill-treated*, wandering *in desert places and mountains*" (Hebrews 11:37-38).[33]

The lack of particulars about Nikodemos's ascetic life offers Kokkinos a blank canvass for infusing his narrative with hesychast elements. He therefore weaves at this point generic passages with a strong hesychast flavor about his hero's spiritual exercises, including fasting, vigils, mortification of the flesh and suppression of passions, which lead to extraordinary spiritual accomplishments. Kokkinos writes that Nikodemos was "well girded with strength by God," "wisely surrounded himself with the cardinal virtues" and "came in the possession of the divine mysteries."[34] Without making any overt references to hesychasm, Kokkinos promotes it by fashioning Nikodemos as pursuing a hesychast lifestyle.[35] The holy man thus undertook continuous meditation and contemplation of the divine, "approached the mountain of impassivity," "mystically saw God through the perception of his soul," and "constantly delighted in God's beauty."[36] Such hesychast undertones are more conspicuous and extensive in Kokkinos's later saints' *lives*.[37]

After twenty years of solitary asceticism, Nikodemos embraced the cenobitic life in the monastery of Philokalles in Thessalonike out of a desire to practice obedience (*hypotagē*).[38] Kokkinos stresses the holy man's devotion to the rule of obedience and the extent of his submission to the superior of the monastery, which elicited the astonishment of his fellow monks.[39] At the same time, however, Nikodemos began to spend time with harlots. Kokkinos does not offer a detailed picture of their encounters, apart from stating that the holy man "always engaged in conversations with prostitutes," pretended "to participate in boisterous revelry" with them, offered them alms, and that he was found "reclining" in their midst prior to his death.[40] This behavior earned him widespread criticism

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[33] Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 2.9-11: τὴν ξένην εἵλετο, στενού**μενος**, *θλιβό**μενος***, *κακουχού**μενος***, *ἐν ἐρημίαις καὶ ὄρεσι* διαιτώ**μενος** (my emphasis). Talbot, "Nikodemos," 225.

[34] Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 2.20, 25-26; 3.1. Talbot, "Nikodemos," 225.

[35] Other late-Byzantine men of letters also include hesychast elements in their hagiographical works. For instance, Gregory Palamas inserts a lengthy section on hesychast experience and practice in his *Logos* on St Peter of Athos (*BHG* 1506), fashioning Peter as an international hesychast. See Mitrea, "'Old wine in new bottles'? Gregory Palamas' *Logos* on Saint Peter of Athos (*BHG* 1506)," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 40 (2016): 243–263.

[36] Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 3.1-3; 2.21. Talbot, "Nikodemos," 225.

[37] See Mitrea, "A Late-Byzantine Hagiographer," 226–238; idem, "'Hail, Glory of the Fathers!' Patristic sources and references in the hagiographical works of Philotheos Kokkinos," in *The Legacy of St. Gregory Palamas: Studies in Late Byzantine Theology and Its Reception*, ed. Tikhon Alexander Pino (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming).

[38] Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 4.1-4.

[39] Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 4.9-11.

[40] Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 4.12-13; 5.6-9; 6.6-7. Talbot, "Nikodemos," 226–228.

and, as Kokkinos mentions, his superior even threw him out of the monastery on several occasions.[41]

Nikodemos's conduct, which masks a spiritual purpose under a façade of promiscuity and provocation, has been interpreted as a display of holy foolery.[42] However, Kokkinos does not attach any label to his hero's actions or employ anywhere in the *v. Nik*. terms denoting holy foolery, such as *salos*, *mōros*, or *mōria*. He simply states that Nikodemos "chose to be considered and called *anathema* (cf. Romans 9:3) by everyone for the sake of his fellow men."[43] Moreover, Kokkinos provides a quite extensive excursus justifying the holy man's behavior, as he would do to an even greater extent in the case of Sabas the Younger.[44] He thus explains that Nikodemos willingly submitted himself to the hardships that accompanied his actions, bearing them with "adamantine will" for the "glory that is to come."[45] Moreover, Kokkinos infuses his narrative once again with hesychast elements, stressing that Nikodemos's soul was "unified mystically with God" and, paraphrasing again the Apostle Paul (Romans 8:38-39), was not distracted by anything external, "*neither things present, nor things to come, nor anything else at all in creation will be able to* distract this soul *from the love* of its Beloved."[46] Kokkinos repeats several times that Nikodemos strove to suffer all the hardship in secret "so that he might thereby attain greater glory from God."[47] Sergey Ivanov describes Nikodemos as a "negligent and dissolute monk, whose provocative behaviour the author adjusted to the hagiographic canon," and highlights Kokkinos's frequent interventions in the narrative and his need to explain Nikodemos's acts of holy foolery.[48]

Kokkinos also extols Nikodemos's ability to abstain from food and be nourished by the life-giving prayer alone. For instance, he presents a case in which the holy man allegedly forewent nourishment for a week, while working in the fields of the monastery, in order to offer his food to the poor or to prostitutes "as payment, to keep them from defiling their beds."[49] Kokkinos fashions this behavior as an effort of his hero to emulate "the divine Vitalios, whose lifestyle and character

41 Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 4.13-15.

42 Sergey Ivanov, *Holy Fools in Byzantium and Beyond*, translated into English by Simon Franklin (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 223–225; Talbot, "Children, healing miracles, holy fools: highlights from the hagiographical works of Philotheos Kokkinos (1300–*ca*. 1379)," *Bysantinska Sällskapet Bulletin* 24 (2005): 48–64, at 57–59.

43 Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 5.14-16. Talbot, "Nikodemos," 227.

44 See, for instance, Philotheos Kokkinos, *The Life of Sabas* 20.36-48, ed. Tsames, *Θεσσαλονικεῖς ἅγιοι*, 198.

45 Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 4.15-17. Talbot, "Nikodemos," 226.

46 Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 4.24-28. Talbot, "Nikodemos," 226–227.

47 Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 2.13-14. Talbot, "Nikodemos," 225; cf. *v. Nik.* 7.3.

48 Ivanov, *Holy Fools*, 224–225, 232.

49 Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 5.6-9. Talbot, "Nikodemos," 227.

he loved excessively."[50] The *Life* of St John the Merciful (*BHG* 886d), patriarch of Alexandria (610–619),[51] narrates the story of a hermit from Gaza by this name, who went to Alexandria at the age of sixty to work as a day laborer. At the end of each day, he used his wages to save harlots from fornication, leading many to give up their depraved lifestyle and marry or become hermits. However, the apparent scandalous nature of his actions earned Vitalios insults and physical assaults, which ultimately contributed to his death. The striking similarity between the life course of these two holy men could indicate that Kokkinos drew on the story of Vitalios when composing the *hypomnēma* on Nikodemos. As his audience was most likely familiar with the story of "the divine Vitalios," Kokkinos artfully makes this *synkrisis* in order to foreshadow, as it were, the similar violent death of Nikodemos, as a consequence of his actions.[52]

Finally, Kokkinos presents the dramatic circumstances surrounding the holy man's death. One day, while reclining in the midst of prostitutes, Nikodemos is fatally stabbed by their 'clients,' described by Kokkinos as the "devil's slaves."[53] The hagiographer thus fashions his hero's death as a result of the devil's plot:

> "But this 'saintly conduct' was intolerable to Satan who had malicious designs against Nikodemos from the very beginning, for the common enemy of our kind bore a severe grudge against him, and ground his teeth against him in insane fashion."[54]

Barely breathing, Nikodemos is taken back to the monastery, but is denied entrance, likely due to the dishonorable circumstances of his stabbing. Shunned by his monastic community, Nikodemos professes his humility one last time—rendered by Kokkinos in narratized speech[55]—, reproaching himself for his unworthiness to enter the monastery, as well as the life to come.[56] This can be interpreted as an indication of Kokkinos's disapproval of Nikodemos's lifestyle[57]. After receiving

[50] Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik*. 5.9-12. Talbot, "Nikodemos," 227 (translation slightly modified).

[51] See *Léontios de Néapolis, Vie de Syméon le fou et Vie de Jean de Chypre*, chapter 38, ed. and trans. by André-Jean Festugière and Lennart Rydén (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1974), 387–391.

[52] Kokkinos's familiarity with the *Life* of St John the Merciful is also evidenced in his *vita* of Germanos Maroules (39.52-57), where he compares his hero to John the Merciful. Cf. Ivanov, *Holy Fools*, 223–224.

[53] Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 6.6, 11-12.

[54] Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 6.1-3. Talbot, "Nikodemos," 228.

[55] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, translated into English by Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1980), 170–171, defines "narratized speech" as the most distant type of discourse in terms of narrative mood, in which the character's words are integrated into the narration.

[56] Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 6.17-20.

[57] Cf. Talbot, "Children, healing miracles, holy fools," 58.

the holy communion outside the gates, the holy man succumbs alone and his body is buried in an unspecified location, in the vicinity of the monastery.[58] Kokkinos expresses his disapproval towards this dramatic episode, inserting several exclamations in his account, such as "o, what stupidity" or "alas."[59] Moreover, he specifies the retribution that befell the murderers, who were captured by the "Latins," that is, the Catalan Company, and had their hands cut off.[60] He also comments on the fairness of the murderers' punishment, deeming it "a just action, even if they did not obtain a punishment worthy of their brazen deed."[61]

After the account of Nikodemos's death, Kokkinos touches briefly on the discovery of his relics by some passers-by who perceived their fragrance a few years later. Upon digging a trench, they found Nikodemos's body, described in *asyndeton* as "intact, whole, complete, having suffered no corruption whatsoever."[62] Returning to the passage I quoted at the beginning of this article, Kokkinos presents this discovery as "a stroke of good fortune" and a reason of joy and celebration for the whole city of Thessalonike.[63] Then, Nikodemos's relics receive a "proper burial with perfumed oils and linen winding cloths," performed by the archbishop of the city (most likely Metropolitan Jeremiah) with all the citizens.[64]

Miraculous elements in Kokkinos's hypomnēma

Having led a controversial lifestyle (often in the company of harlots), Nikodemos was most likely not in want of detractors. Consequently, Kokkinos dedicates close to a quarter of the *hypomnēma* to miracle accounts, for the purpose of legitimizing and defending his hero. This includes one healing and two punishment miracles, which depict the holy man as swift in helping his supporters and, conversely, punishing his opponents.

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58 Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 6.13-17; 7.1-4.

59 Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 6.12-13.

60 Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 7.5-8. In the spring of 1308, the Catalan Company raided the outskirts of Thessalonike. Cf. José Simón Palmer, "The *Life* of St. Sabas the Younger as a source for the history of the Catalan Grand Company," *Scripta Mediterranea* 18 (1997): 35–39.

61 Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 7.7-8. Talbot, "Nikodemos," 228.

62 Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 7.17-18: σῶον, ἄρτιον, ὅλον, μηδεμίαν δήπουθεν καταφθορὰν ὑποστάν. Talbot, "Nikodemos," 229.

63 Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 7.20-26.

64 Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 7.26-29. Talbot, "Nikodemos," 229. On Metropolitan Jeremiah, see George T. Dennis, "The late Byzantine metropolitans of Thessalonike," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 57 (2003): 255–264; Johannes Preiser-Kapeller, *Der Episkopat im späten Byzanz. Ein Verzeichnis der Metropoliten und Bischöfe des Patriarchats von Konstantinopel in der Zeit von 1204 bis 1453* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2008), 444–445.

The first miracle presents a case of miraculous healing, in which a man is cured of paralysis after making supplications and shedding tears at Nikodemos's shrine.[65] However, while the miracle itself seems fairly common, Kokkinos's account stands out through the detailed description of the beneficiary, a Serbian from Dalmatia by the name of George Karabides, "who once came over to the Romans as a deserter" and settled in Thessalonike.[66] This level of detail[67] could indicate that the man was known to Kokkinos's audience and might have even been alive when he wrote the *v. Nik.* Additionally, Kokkinos might have selected this miracle in order to underline the role played by Serbians (whom Kokkinos calls *Tribaloi)* in promoting Nikodemos's cult. It is surely not by chance that the saint features in a fresco in the *katholikon* of the Hilandar Monastery on Mount Athos, rebuilt and painted under the patronage of the Serbian kral Stephen Uroš II Milutin (1282–1321).[68]

The second miracle account features a high official who travels from Adrianople to Thessalonike in the imperial entourage, perhaps that of Michael IX Palaiologos.[69] The man visits the saint's shrine and asks about Nikodemos's life, learning from those present about his conduct regarding prostitutes. However, instead of marveling at the holy man's life and deeds, the traveler passes a negative moral judgment on the story, finding it "vulgar and base."[70] Consequently, when he kisses the saint's coffin, his lips are stuck to it as punishment. Kokkinos captures the reaction of the onlookers, who are greatly terrified at the sight of this retribution and plead to the saint on behalf of the disbeliever, saving him from his penance. Kokkinos most likely referenced the intra-textual audience, namely, the onlookers, in order to serve as a role model for his audience and offer a cue about the reaction expected upon hearing the account of this miracle. When Kokkinos composed the *hypomnēma*, there might have still been detractors

[65] Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 8.

[66] Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 8.1-3. Talbot, "Nikodemos," 229.

[67] Details regarding the age, origin, social status, and even name of beneficiaries were fairly common in late-Byzantine miracle accounts and collections of miracles. These details served the purpose of reinforcing the veracity of the miracle accounts, especially in the context of the canonization process of a holy figure, whose miracle-making powers they attested. See, for instance, the posthumous miracles of Patriarch Athanasios I, recorded by Theoktistos the Stoudite, as well as the dossier of Palamas's miracles complied by Kokkinos.

[68] See Ioustinos Simonopetritis, "Τοιχογραφία τοῦ ὁσίου Νικοδήμου τοῦ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ στό καθολικό τῆς μονῆς Χιλανδαρίου," *Πρωτᾶτον* 7 (1983): 133–137; Sharon Gerstel, "Civic and monastic influences on church decoration in late Byzantine Thessalonike," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 57 (2003): 225–239, at 235.

[69] Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 9. On Michael IX Palaiologos, see Helga Gickler, *Kaiser Michael IX. Palaiologos: sein Leben und Wirken (1278 bis 1320): eine biographische Annäherung* (Frankfurt am Main: PL Academic Research, 2015).

[70] Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 9.12-13. Talbot, "Nikodemos," 230.

of the holy man and people who questioned his actions and sanctity. Therefore, the miracle might have served as a legitimizing device in support of Nikodemos's sainthood, as well as in spreading his cult, since the punishment turned the skeptic into a "loud herald and true expounder of the miracle" and implicitly of the saint.[71]

The last miracle account in the *v. Nik.* presents the story of a woman who visits the saint's shrine to seek his help in curing an unspecified affliction that had troubled her for many years.[72] However, instead of simply praying or touching the saint's relics, she surreptitiously removes and appropriates one of his teeth. Interestingly, while in most miracle accounts the beneficiaries touch their afflicted body parts to a sarcophagus, Kokkinos writes that the woman does the reverse. She places the head of the saint on the afflicted part of her body, which suggests that the saint's head could have been preserved in a different reliquary chest than his body. Kokkinos does not present the woman's act as premeditated or motivated by a desire to acquire material rewards by selling the relic, as was often the case in instances of *furta sacra*.[73] She might have appropriated the saint's tooth simply to increase her chances of recovery. However, instead of a swift cure, the "wretched woman," as Kokkinos calls her, is struck with madness and punished for the injury she brought to the saint's body. Upon returning the holy relic to its rightful place with a tearful confession and remorse, the woman is absolved of her punishment. Kokkinos's way of presenting both these punishment miracles (*v. Nik.* 9–10) underlines their instructive function. Nikodemos's coffin "educated" (*epaideue*) the "uneducated lips" (*apaideuta cheile*) of the skeptic man, while the woman who stole his tooth received swiftly her "education" (*paideia*), or "was punished."

Before the final invocation, Kokkinos briefly mentions that a church was built in honor of the saint with imperial donation on the site where his relics had been discovered.[74] In the closing of the *hypomnēma*, Kokkinos invokes Nikodemos's protection of the flock at Philokalles against "visible and invisible enemies." Moreover, he asks the saint to guide his actions as superior of the monastery, so that "having led *a quiet and tranquil life* (1 Timothy 2:2), [he] may offer both them and [himself] as unblemished and untouched sacrifices to the all-holy Trinity."[75] This may hint at the setting and the time when Kokkinos delivered this *hypomnēma*, which was most likely in front of the monastic community at Philokalles, perhaps on the feast day of the saint (1340/1–1342).

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71 Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 9.25-26. Talbot, "Nikodemos," 230.

72 Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 10.

73 See Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990).

74 Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 11.

75 Philotheos Kokkinos, *v. Nik.* 12.6-12. Talbot, "Nikodemos," 231 (translation slightly modified).

Conclusion

This article has analyzed Philotheos Kokkinos's first hagiographical composition dedicated to a contemporaneous holy figure, namely Nikodemos the Younger, looking at Kokkinos's technique of arranging the bits and pieces of information about the holy man in the form of a *hypomnēma*. Despite the scarcity of biographical data, Kokkinos created a balanced structure for the short *vita*, allocating narrative space to: (1) his hero's early life and period of wandering asceticism; (2) his life in a cenobitic environment and activities as a holy fool; (3) violent death and discovery of his holiness; as well as (4) manifestations of his miracle-making powers, despite the controversy surrounding his later life. True to the literary conventions of this type of 'hagiographical genre,' Kokkinos's account is concise and unembellished with rhetorical ornaments, classical references or use of dialogue. However, as a gifted hagiographer, he succeeds to flesh out within these constraints a life and an identity for his hero, employing scriptural quotations and allusions, as well as *synkriseis* with Biblical figures and other models, particularly the holy fool Vitalios. Moreover, Kokkinos infuses his narrative with hesychast undertones when extolling Nikodemos's virtues or justifying his actions, fashioning him as a practicing hesychast. Kokkinos's later *vitae* of contemporaneous holy men include more extensive hesychast elements and references, through which he sought to promote and vindicate the hesychast theology that has remained at the core of Christian Orthodoxy up to this day. Through his *hypomnēma*, Kokkinos composed an authoritative text that filled in a gap and honored, promoted and perhaps rekindled the local cult of Nikodemos the Younger. As he noted in the preface to the *v. Nik.*, Kokkinos envisaged this work as a spiritual exercise addressed to lovers of the good, i.e., the monastic community at Philokalles, and by extension the whole city of Thessalonike, to train and encourage them to emulate Nikodemos.

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